

## John Todd Ecological Design

### **Omega, BNIM Architects, and John Todd Ecological Design Celebrate Grand Opening of the Omega Center**

*Center Slated to be first green building to Achieve Both LEED® Platinum and Living Building Challenge™ Certification.*

**June 24, 2009** - [PRLog](#) -- RHINEBECK, NY – Omega Institute today announced it will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony on July 16, 2009 at 3:30 p.m. to celebrate the Grand Opening of the much anticipated Omega Center for Sustainable Living (OCSL), an award-winning green building designed by Kansas City-based BNIM Architects, renowned for sustainable design.

The OCSL is a state-of-the art water reclamation facility and environmental education center that brings together wastewater recycling, clean energy, green architecture, and other sustainability elements that can be replicated locally and globally. The OCSL will provide sustainability education for students of all ages, including professionals, policy makers, developers, and the 23,000 visitors who come to Omega every year.

“The opening of the Omega Center for Sustainable Living is historic both for our campus and for our country,” said Skip Backus, chief executive officer at Omega. “The OCSL demonstrates the critical intersection of environmental sustainability, renewable energy, and the new green economy. We are very proud to be at the forefront of this movement.”

The celebration will include keynote remarks from Omega’s leadership and notable speakers such as: Majora Carter, founder of Sustainable South Bronx and president of The Majora Carter Group; Dr. John Todd, founder of John Todd Ecological Design and designer of the Eco-Machine™, a central component of the OCSL; and Tara Sullivan, executive director of the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commission. Those attending the event will also have an opportunity to tour the OCSL.

“BNIM is proud to support the Omega Institute in living their mission to provide hope and healing for individuals and society,” said Steve McDowell, BNIM Principal and Project Designer. “We designed the Omega Center for Sustainable Living to compliment Omega’s purpose by targeting the highest level of sustainability—the Living Building. The building demonstrates that the built environment can be healing and regenerative of natural systems.”

The OCSL supplies all of its own energy needs, and its operation is carbon neutral. The self-sustaining building is heated and cooled using geothermal systems, and utilizes photovoltaic power. It will serve as the heart of Omega’s ongoing environmental initiatives and includes a greenhouse, an Eco-Machine, constructed wetland, and a classroom which will be open year-round to the public.

The core of the center is a 4,500-square-foot greenhouse containing a water filtration system called the Eco-Machine. This living system uses plants, bacteria, algae, snails, and fungi to recycle Omega’s wastewater (approximately 5 million gallons per year) into clean water that is used to restore the aquifer. The Eco-Machine incorporates technology first seen in similar systems known as Living Machines. Dr. John Todd, and his son, Jonathan Todd are the ecological architects for this project. In 2008, Dr. Todd won the First Annual Buckminster Fuller Challenge for his proposal Comprehensive Design for a Carbon Neutral World: The Challenge of Appalachia, which lays out a strategy for transforming one and a half

million acres of strip-mined lands in Appalachia into a harmonious self-sustaining community.

Dr. Todd will be a keynote at the Grand Opening. Speaking of this milestone, Dr. Todd's son and John Todd Ecological Design President, Jonathan Todd, remarked, "We are honored to be a central part of this historic achievement, and I know my father is particularly happy and proud to see an Eco-Machine system of this scale in North America."

The OCSL is expected to go beyond LEED Platinum certification to achieve "Living Building" certification. At the 2007 Greenbuild Conference, BNIM Architects and Omega received the "Living Building Challenge On-the-Boards Award" for the superior OCSL design. Developed by the Cascadia Region Green Building Council, the Living Building Challenge outlines 16 rigorous requirements that must be met for projects to achieve the highest level of environmental performance possible today.

Omega anticipates leaders from key environmental groups, governmental officials, opinion leaders, the project's architectural and engineering teams, and members of the media will attend the Grand Opening.

For more information about the Omega Center for Sustainable Living, please visit [eOmega.org/ocsl](http://eOmega.org/ocsl)

#### About Omega Institute for Holistic Studies

Founded in 1977, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies is the nation's most trusted source for wellness and personal growth. As a nonprofit organization, Omega offers diverse and innovative educational experiences that inspire an integrated approach to personal and social change. Located on 195 acres in the beautiful Hudson Valley, Omega welcomes more than 23,000 people to its workshops, conferences, and retreats in Rhinebeck, New York and at exceptional locations around the world. [eOmega.org](http://eOmega.org)

#### About BNIM

With 39 years of experience as a multidisciplinary architectural firm, Berkebile, Nelson, Immenschuh, McDowell Architects has built a reputation for thoughtful and responsive design through technical competence and conscientious service. With offices in Kansas City, Missouri, Houston, Texas, Des Moines, Iowa, San Diego and Los Angeles, California, BNIM has completed many significant public and private projects at both local and national levels. The firm's areas of expertise include sustainable design and community redevelopment, urban planning and design, stormwater management, educational facilities, campus master planning, and residential and corporate office spaces. BNIM is committed to restorative design, which aims to maximize human potential, productivity, and health while increasing the vitality of natural systems. For more information, call Maria Maffry at 816.783.1500 or visit [www.bnim.com](http://www.bnim.com)

#### About John Todd Ecological Design

Founded in 1989, John Todd Ecological Design commercializes the discoveries and ecological applications of Dr. John Todd with an approach that is well suited for water reclamation in municipal and a variety of commercial wastewater environments including commercial residential designs. The company is at the forefront of natural systems design for the removal of chemicals, petroleum hydrocarbons, endocrine disruptors, and other detrimental water pollutants.

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